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REFLECTIVE JOURNALS AS SELF-ASSESSMENT TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL

Research Article

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Abstract

This research is experimental research with a 2x2 factorial design. In this study, the researcher took students of two classes as a sample of the research, one for the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG). There were 32 students in each experimental and control class, so the total sample was 64 students. Both of these classes were considered to have English knowledge and writing skill at the same level. The samples of the experiment group taught by using a reflective journal and the control class taught by using the traditional writing method. And all these samples are viewed from students' motivation. The sample was obtained by implementing a cluster random sampling technique. Each class was divided into two groups each of which consisted of 16 high motivation students and 16 low motivation students. the researcher used Multifactor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) 2x2 to know the effects of the independent variables Reflective Journals and traditional writing method and attributive variable (Students' Motivation) toward the dependent variable (Writing skill). And the research result reveals as follows; (1) Reflective Journals is more effective than traditional writing method to promote students' writing. (2) Students have high motivation have better writing skill than those low motivation students. (3) There is an interaction between teaching assessment and students' motivation to teach writing.

Keyword: Reflective Journals; Self-Assessment; Traditional Method; Motivation; Writing Skill

1. Introduction

In the Indonesian curriculum, writing becomes one skill which is taught in almost all levels of education. Developing writing skills are the key element of the professional qualifications of English teaching and learning (Hyland, 2011). In this case, teachers tend to give extra attention for students in teaching to produce good writing. However, writing can be quite challenging for the students because it is considered as the most difficult skill in English teaching and learning. As said by Ghaith (2002) that writing is a complex process that allows the writer to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible concrete. In fact, most of the students have a difficult time with the complex idea if they try to think only in their minds. It is in line with Nunan (2003) view writing as a complex cognitive activity in which the writer is demanded to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously at the sentence level including control of content, spelling, and letter formation and beyond the sentence structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraph and text. It means that to practice writing makes the students exercise their thoughts in ways that are very difficult without writing down on a paper.

Referring to this case, as a facilitator and controller in the class, teacher must use an appropriate technique, method, assessment, and media. There were different names of formative assessment (alternative assessment, democratic, authentic, assessment for learning collaborative assessment) which takes place during the learning process and allows feedback from its own practice that can be improved students' performances in English. Wei (2010) states that formative assessments have some different forms; such as teacher, peer, self-assessment or combination of them and uses various techniques like classroom observation, reflective journal, portfolios, questionnaires, interviews, etc. It is increasingly realized that one of the main purposes of self-assessment in higher education is to help students to develop themselves and acquire range of writing skill including skills relating to organizing their own learning, time management, task management, problem-solving, reflecting, and so on (Race, 2001). Furthermore, the self-assessment focus on the delivery of content and the aim of this assessment is to develop skills which contribute to the students' ability to judge their own progress and performance (Cassidy, 2007).

One of the self-assessment methods that can help students in writing class is reflective journal. Mlynarczyk (2013) states that there are three components of reflective journals writing and it is important elements in improving ESL/EFL students' writing abilities; such as practice, attitude, and individual tutoring. It means, the reflective journal gives the students extensive writing practice, the opportunity to express and perhaps to change their attitude toward writing, and the chance to develop a personal relationship with teacher. In other words, it encourages the learners the reflection needed to gain increased control as writers (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). According to Taufiqulloh (2014), teaching students to evaluate their progress begins with realizing that students will be learning new skills and it can be carried out with these four steps: setting criteria, applying criteria, setting and working towards goals. So that, teachers need the students' point of view about their ability; because there are many reasons that cannot be expressed by the students in the result of the test then teacher might be consider them as an evaluation for the next teaching and learning process. Cottrell (2003) suggested that journal activity is a systematic way of documenting learning and collecting information for self-analysis and reflection. With this reflective journal writing, students can reduce the stress in writing and to give them a personal space to write their own improvement, worries, and problems personally.

Edwards (2014) notes the numerous cognitive and metacognitive benefits of self-assessment, citing the increased time spent thinking, reviewing, and summarizing all of which lead to the development of autonomy and a greater understanding of high-quality work, the nature of writing, and the assessment process. It is the same as self-assessment involves both cognitive skills and disposition (Lai, 2011). It can be concluded that writing journal is a tool to develop language skills rather than observing students the improvement of language competency. The difference is the use of online connectivity that eased students to access the application all over the place. Furthermore, writing a journal a self-assessment is the high technology tool that contains component language skills of analyzing arguments, making inferences, judging or evaluating, and making decisions or solving problems. However, students need to be trained by the teacher and the researcher on how to access the application.

Another method in writing is the traditional method. According to Hyun, et al (2017), the traditional writing method in the classroom is dominated by a summative orientation, which sees teachers administer writing tasks in the form of tests that focus primarily on writing performance and scores. The use of traditional writing assessment as scientific

measurement of learning which teachers administered writing tasks in the form of tests and focus on students' writing skill and scores. It is in line with Hyun, et al (2017) that traditional method testing serves the purpose of "assessment of learning" where students' performance and progress are assessed against specified learning targets and objectives. Therefore, scores play is a helpful method in traditional writing assessment that can be used by the teacher that they provide objective evidence for student learning and suffice for feedback. Dunn, et. al (2003) state that the traditional writing method allows students to demonstrate how well they can access and manage information in a meaningful way. This traditional assessment is used in higher education to assess many different skills in an integrated way. However, to practice student writing, giving tasks, scoring data, teacher's feedback is students' opportunity to improve their writing skill.

By the descriptions above, it is obvious that this topic is challenging to explore since there is no formal evaluation on the implementation of writing journals as self-assessment in English Language Teaching (ELT) in this school. In the writer's opinion, therefore, it might give an extra consideration on the implementation of self-assessment for students to promote their writing skill. Furthermore, the use of writing journals help the researcher in identifying and analyzing students' real problems in writing class, and also to promote students' writing skill. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct experimental research entitled: "Reflective Journals as Self-Assessment to Promote Students' Writing Skill". And this research viewed from student motivation. From the cognitive point of view, motivation concerns more about the individuals' decision or goal (Brown, 2007). It means that individuals' intentions or goals become the main reason for an action.

2. Method

This research was conducted at SMAN 5 Surakarta, Central Java from February 2019 to April 2019. This experimental research used a 2x2 factorial design. In this study, the researcher took students of two IPS classes as a research sample, one from X IPS 1 as the experimental group (EG) and X IPS 2 as the control group (CG). Both of these classes were considered to have English knowledge and writing skill at the same level. The samples of experiment group are the students of X IPS 1 which consisted of 32 students (20 girls and 12 boys). And the control groups of this experiment are the students of X IPS 2 consisted of 32 students (19 girls and 13 boys). In this case, the researcher teach class X IPS 1 use reflective journal and for students in X IPS 2, the researcher taught using traditional writing method.

The population of this research was tenth-grade students from IPS classes of SMAN 5 Surakarta in the academic year of 2018-2019. There are 32 students in each experimental and control class, so the total sample was 64 students. In choosing the sample, the researchers used cluster random sampling.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Results of the Research

The computation of normality test divided the scores into eight groups of data, as follows: (1) The data of the students taught by using Reflective Journals (A_1) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.077 with L_t (0.140). (2) The data of the students taught by using the traditional writing method (A_2) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.080 with L_t (0.140). (3) The data of High Motivation students (B_1) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.135 with L_t (0.140). (4) The data of low motivation students (B_2) shows that the highest value of

L_o is 0.113 with L_t (0.140). (5) The data of the students having High Motivation taught using Reflective Journals (A_1B_1) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.133 with L_t (0.234). (6) The data of the students having Low Motivation taught using Reflective Journals (A_1B_2) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.217 with L_t (0.234). (7) The data of the students having High Motivation taught using the traditional writing method (A_2B_1) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.202 with L_t (0.234). (8) The data of the students having low motivation taught using the traditional writing method (A_2B_2) shows that the highest value of L_o is 0.184 with L_t (0.234). It can be concluded that all the writing scores data of the eight groups are in normal distribution because L_o of all the data is lower than L_t ($L_o < L_t$) at the significance $\alpha=0.05$.

Moreover, the data reveal that χ_{02} (1.26) is lower than χ_{12} (7.81), it can be concluded that the data are homogeneous. It means that the data of this research are obtained from the homogenous sample.

After knowing the result of the normality and the homogeneity of the data, the researcher used Multifactor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) 2x2 to know the effects of the independent variables Reflective Journals and traditional writing method and attributive variable (Students' Motivation) toward the dependent variable (Writing skill). In addition, it functions to check if there is an interaction among those variables. Statistically, H_o (null hypothesis) is rejected if F_o is higher than F_t ($F_o > F_t$). The data result is shown in the following table 1 and 2.

Table 1. *The Mean Scores*

Motivation (B)	Teaching Media (A)		Total
	Reflective journals (A_1)	Traditional writing Method (A_2)	
High Motivation (B_1)	83.19	74.06	78.63
Low Motivation (B_2)	71.25	71.44	71.34
Total	77.22	72.75	74.98

Table 2. *The Summary of Multifactor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) 2x2*

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F_o	$F_{t(0,05)}$
Between Columns	319.52	1	319.52	5.579	4.043
Between Rows	848.27	1	848.27	14.811	
Interaction	346.89	1	346.89	6.057	
Between Group	1514.67	3	504.890625		
Within Group	3436.31	60	57.271875		
Total Σ	4950.98	63			

- Because F_o between columns (5.579) is higher than F_t at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ (4.04), H_o is rejected and the difference between columns is significant. Thus, it can be concluded that Reflective Journals differs significantly from traditional writing method in their effect on the students' writing skill. In addition, the mean of A_1 (77.22) is higher than the mean of (A_2) (72.75), so that, it can be concluded that Reflective Journals is more effective than the traditional writing method to teach writing.
- Because F_o between rows (14.811) is higher than F_t at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ (4.04), H_o is rejected and the difference between rows is significant. It can be said that the writing skill of students who have high motivation and those who have low motivation are significantly different. In addition, the mean of B_1 (78.63) is higher than

the mean of (B₂) (71.34), so that, it can be concluded that students who have high motivation have better writing skill than those who have low motivation.

- c. Because F_o columns by rows (6.057) is higher than F_t at the level of significance $\alpha=0.05$ (4.04), H_o is rejected and there is an interaction between teaching assessment and students' motivation to teach writing. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of teaching assessment is influenced by the levels of students' motivation.

The next is the computation of ANOVA result. It shows that there is an interaction and effect of independent variable on the dependent variable. To compare the mean of every treatment with other means, the researcher used Tukey test. The computation result of Tukey test is provided in table 3.

Table 3. *The Summary of Tukey Test*

Data	Sample	Error Variance	q_o	$q_t(0,05)$	Category
A1 AND A2	32	1.338	3.34	2,89	Significant
B1 AND B2	32	1.338	5.44	2,89	Significant
A1 B1 AND A2 B1	16	1.892	4.82	3,06	Significant
A1 B2 AND A2 B2	16	1.892	0.10	3,06	Not Significant

The result of the Tukey Test above shows the following influences:

- Because the result of q_o between columns A₁-A₂ (3.34) is higher than q_t value at the level of significance $\alpha =0.05$ (2.89), applying Reflective Journals is significantly different from traditional writing method to teach writing. In addition, because the mean of A₁ (77.22) is higher than the mean of (A₂) (72.75), it can be concluded that Reflective Journals is more effective than Traditional writing to teach writing.
- Because the result of q_o between columns B₁-B₂ (5.44) is higher than q_t value at the level of significance $\alpha =0.05$ (2.89), it can be concluded that the students who have high motivation and those who have low motivation are significantly different in their writing skill. In addition, because the mean of B₁ (78.63) is higher than the mean of (B₂) (71.34), it can be concluded that students who have high motivation have better writing skill than those having low motivation.
- Because the result of q_o between cells A₁B₁-A₂B₁ (4.80) is higher than q_t value at the level of significance $\alpha =0.05$ (3.06), applying Reflective Journals is significantly different from Traditional writing method to teach writing for the students who have high motivation. In addition, because the mean of A₁B₁ (83.19) is higher than that of A₂B₁ (74.06), it can be concluded that Reflective Journals is more effective than traditional writing method to teach writing for students having high motivation.
- Because the result of q_o between cells A₁B₂-A₂B₂ (0.10) is lower than q_t value at the level of significance $\alpha =0.05$ (3.06), the difference between columns for students having low motivation is not significant. It can be concluded that Reflective Journals is as effective as Traditional writing method to teach writing for students having low motivation.

3.2 The Discussion of the Results

Referring to the results of the data analysis above, the research findings can be elaborated as follows:

1. The Difference in effectiveness between Reflective Journals as and traditional writing method

The research finding shows that there is a significant difference between teaching writing using reflective journals and teaching writing using traditional method. Reflective journals are more effective than traditional writing method in teaching writing, as proved by the higher mean score of students taught by using reflective journals than that those students taught by using Traditional writing method.

According to Hiemstra (2001), reflective journal is typically hand written in a notebook or on a pad of paper as means for recording thoughts, reflections, feelings, personal opinions, and even hopes or fears during an educational experience. Students' works were checked by the teacher, and notes about their writings were taken, some of these notes helped the teacher assess the teaching and learning process, which helped her to modify her teaching decisions. According to students' notes and impressions, so the journal writings supply the teacher with feedback she did not get in the classroom. By using the reflective journal, the students can practice at their own pace that enables them to be autonomous learners under the guidance and instruction from the teacher. Hamp and Heasley (2006) state that the most obvious way to help students become a good writer is by writing. Students can articulate their thoughts without the threat of those thoughts being judge later by writing journals (Brown, 2004). In addition, to complete the writing tasks, students need to keep their own personal journals. It gives students more chances to write what is relevant to them. By keeping journals, students can record their personal writing of ideas, opinions, and worries. Through personal writing, students can develop both writing skill and awareness, and increase the ability to relate each other. Moreover, writing journals will help students to develop the habit of thinking on paper and show how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing (Tuan, 2010).

In addition, since the reflective journal facilitates the students to self-assessing their own works, the students become more analytical and are able to develop their critical thinking and awareness towards the writing skill indirectly. This occurs when the students are participating in the process of evaluating what they read, write, and learn in the classroom. The students indirectly develop their critical thinking as they do the self-reviewing, self-editing, and self-evaluating. They also build the students' conscious awareness because the feedback from the teacher directly helps the students pay more attention to the content and the language.

Likewise, students' attitude in reflective journals is rather positive and students are also active in practicing their writing. The reflective journal also provides the students to develop English language learning as well as the writing skill (McMillan and Hearn, 2008). The reflective journal offers motivating, authentic, and exciting learning environment through self-assessing. The students who never write reflective journal will find interesting and motivating. Students can articulate their thoughts without the threat of those thoughts being judges later by writing journals (Brown, 2004). In addition, to complete the writing tasks, students need to keep the own personal journals. It gives students more chances to write what is relevant to them. Through personal writing, students can develop both writing skill and awareness, and increase the ability to relate each other. Moreover, writing journals will help students develop the habit of thinking on paper and show how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing. Finally, in reflective journal the students asked to write

their thought about their achievement and they get feedback from friend and teacher that require them to improve their writing. So by keeping journals, students can record their personal writing of ideas, opinions, and worries. In addition, they can monitor and improve their writing quality by reviewing their previous journal.

On the other hand, traditional writing is the common method that can help the teacher in teaching writing, yet it is still applied in nowadays teaching and learning. However, it has several weaknesses. In traditional writing method, the teacher more attends to explain more than giving the students opportunity to interact in the class. Moreover, the practice of traditional writing a method emphasizes the students to do the writing task that explained by the teacher and the result using teachers' judgment of students' performance on written accuracy. Teachers simply give the topic without providing specific learning targets; student writing is assessed against some general assessment criteria such as content, language, organization, grammar and mechanics, and the teacher feedback is summative rather than formative, mainly comprising feedback on the student performance and evaluate on the basis of scores. It will be a big problem if the teaching technique is not interactive or not interesting. It happens because the students will feel confused, bored, and uninterested in the classroom. Consequently, the students get difficulty in writing. Moreover, unclear traditional writing will impede students in identifying an idea.

From the discussion above and the result of this research, it can be concluded that reflective journals are more effective than traditional writing method in teaching writing for the tenth grade students of SMAN 5 Surakarta in the academic year of 2018/2019.

2. The Difference between Students Having High Motivation and Students Having Low Motivation

The research finding reveals that students having high motivation have better writing skill than those having low motivation. It is proved by the higher mean score of the students having high motivation than those having low motivation. Students with high motivation tend to be more active, creating, and do the writing delightfully. They have more confidence to do the challenges in developing their writing. Also, they have better writing skill because they can create something new, develop writing and brilliant ideas, and solve the problem in teaching and learning process that makes them energetic and enthusiastic in learning. They like and enjoy challenging situations and explore ideas and imagination to achieve the goal. Students with high motivation feel that the learning process is crucial also they tend to learn best in order to succeed in learning and to promote a positive self-image. According to Brown (2007), motivation is emerging from behavioral, cognitive, and behaviorist perspectives. A behavioral view from motivation is driven to acquire the positive reinforcement. It means that the students having high motivation will be give positive improvement in their learning because, for them, the big challenge is the way to strengthen their ability. They also usually tend to be active in following the activities in the classroom. They also finish their assignment and do the entire teacher's instruction. In the other hand, playfulness, discipline, and responsibility are the characteristics of high motivation students.

In producing good English text, students do not only need a good assessment method but also having a motivation that strengthening their ability in writing. Munns & Woodward (2006) state that students' motivation can be stimulated by well-designed learning procedures; and it helps students in understanding the content (Bingham, et al., 2010). This is an important role in writing because by having motivation the students can assess their skill. In addition, the data analysis reveals that the students having high motivation have a

better writing skill. It is highly needed for the students to have high motivation because they will come up with unpredictable ideas to make good writing by considering complex notions. In other words, motivation is required for producing a piece of good writing. Motivation determines students' writing skill.

On the contrary, students who have low motivation tend to be passive due to the monotonous concept, creation, and idea that they have. They likely produce conventional ideas rather than their own fresh ideas. They are afraid of making mistakes that make them limit their way of thinking to explore the ideas. They do not like challenges and do not confidence to get success. In addition, students with low motivation cannot write beyond what they see, read, and listen. In this state, students will be easily discouraged and disturbed when they meet the challenges in their learning. According to Harmer (2004), motivation is a kind of internal desire which encourage someone to do things to achieve something. It means that motivation is the internal stimulation for students to decide how the effort and action to reach their learning goals. Thus, if students are unmotivated students in the class have a poorer idea, get difficulty in expressing the opinion and solving the problem, and it can be a distraction to other students. So, a teacher must aware to recognize how important motivation is to make their teaching success.

On the other hand, low motivation students are reluctant in exploring their ability especially in producing a simple draft or sentence to create good writing and they tend to not active during the learning process. Further, they prefer imitating ideas from other students during the writing process. With this regard of promoting their writing skill, unmotivated students focus their attention too much that makes them cannot think and produce original ideas. They will be easily discouraged and disturbed when they meet the challenges in their learning.

3. The interaction between assessment method and students' motivation on the Students' Writing Skills

The finding of the research proves that there is an interaction between assessment method and students' motivation to teach writing skill. The result of the data analysis reveals that reflective journals is significantly different from traditional writing method to teach writing for the students having high motivation, but it is insignificantly different from those who have low motivation.

Reflective journals is more effective in teaching writing to the students having high motivation because this self-assessment method requires the students to engage actively in practicing by following all activities and tasks, and evaluating their work clearly and precisely. On the other hand, using self-assessment and responding to their own practices is to increase their independence and self-management (Boud& Associates, 2010). That self-assessment contributes to the learning of individual students and to the development of an effective and responsive skill. Further, in using this self-assessment, giving additional information and feedback that can be done by the students and teacher in the reflective journals course that results in more student-centered for the students who have high motivation. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007), journal writing facilitates the students to develop the language that they need in students' learning. That is why journal writing can help the students in acquiring a level of fluency in written language.

As a result, students with high motivation can maintain their maximum goal in using reflective journals. They have high imagination, curiosity, initiative, self-confidence, and bravery in taking risk in expressing and exploring ideas. Subsequently, students having high

motivation excavate their potential ideas to create a significant contribution to their writing. In other words, they cannot just make a simple and general writing. It is in line with reflective journals that as the center point of the learning, students are required to be active in the learning process and the teacher takes role as a manager, motivator, facilitator, and controller to manage, motivate, facilitate, and control the material as well as the process of learning in the classroom.

On the other hand, the students having low motivation have opposite characteristics with high motivation students. They are likely to be passive, less confidence, have no initiation and think only one possible answer in their mind when they are facing a problem. They also do the task based on the instruction and do not eagerly think beyond it. They do not like challenging activities and tend not to take part in the activities. Moreover, in writing class, unmotivated students are not thinking about what they write, do not think about rules, problems, and how things and language work, and receive what is told by the teacher. They are usually given task for which there is only one possible answer. Therefore, they get difficulty working in a challenging situation

Due to the characteristics of low motivated students, reflective journals and traditional writing method can be implemented to teach writing to the students with low motivation. Some of their characteristics are not advocating them to enhance their writing skill. Reflective Journals used to enhance students' self-motivation, self-evaluating, self-assessing, and problem-solving in writing because low motivated students have low motivation and have limited idea that makes them having difficulty when they write. In addition, this assessment method supports 21st-century skill in which it increases students' critical thinking, motivation, and resourcefulness. By using reflective journals, they evaluate their writing, can have discussion, and can get feedback from their friends and teacher that can give opinion in solving the problem so that they can improve their writing skill. Traditional writing method can also be implemented for low motivated students. This assessment helps the students in identifying their competence. Moreover, it improves students' positive attitudes in writing and it enhances students' positive attitudes to learning in teaching writing.

From the discussion above, reflective journals and traditional writing method can be applied in teaching writing to the students having low motivation. It happens because of their characteristics which promoting their potential competency to produce good writing. Therefore, teaching and learning process is not successfully applied when it is used to teach students with low motivation. Ultimately, reflective journal is as effective as traditional writing method to teach writing for low motivation students.

4. Conclusion

Dealing with the findings the research, it can be concluded as follows: (1) Reflective journal is more effective than traditional writing method to teach writing to the tenth-grade students; (2) High motivation students have better writing skill than low motivation students for the tenth-grade students; and (3) There is an interaction between teaching assessment and students' motivation in teaching writing to the tenth-grade students. Based on the research findings above, Reflective Journal is an effective self-assessment method for teaching writing to the tenth-grade students of SMAN 5 Surakarta in the academic year of 2018/2019. Then, other researchers can conduct further research with the different variables including students' interest, motivation, intelligence, self- assessment, self-confidence, self-esteem, and many others.

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